7/10/04

THE GAZETTE

Let

PRIDEFEST SNUB

Mayor's, council's actions divide community

Apparently Mayor Lionel Rivera and the majority of the City Council do not abide by the city of Colorado Springs proclamation emblazoned on its Web site: "We create community." Their refusal to issue the traditional proclamation supporting Pridefest this month, while unnecessary to the success of the event, is a divisive act ("Pridefest receives no support from mayor," The Gazette, July 7). It creates a climate reminiscent of 1992 when Amendment 2 stirred up the city and state.

Council members who justified their stance by saying they feel this year's Pridefest will be more political than in the past would do well to remember one of our freedoms here in America: freedom of speech. Whether they support gay marriage is irrelevant, but since they brought it up let's look at another building block of our nation — separation of church and state. Gay marriage is inevitable because it is about equality and rights, not personal opinions and religious perceptions.

Pridefest will take place regardless of the council's decision, and gays and lesbians will continue to work in and contribute to the community of Colorado Springs. Perhaps some day the current city leadership will recognize this and get back to the city's goal of creating community, rather than dividing it.

Kathy French
Judy DeGroot
Colorado Springs

City's image with gays could hurt economy

With Colorado Springs entertaining thoughts of a joint venture project with the private sector to build a downtown convention center, it makes you wonder who will actually book their organizations into this center. Probably only white, well-employed, "Christian" heterosexual males, since Lionel Rivera, Will Perkins, Ed Bircham, James Dobson, Ted Haggard and their respective so-called family values groups are doing everything they can to drive away a large segment of the population from either moving here or booking a convention in our city.

Rivera's refusal to welcome gays and lesbians as equals in our community is only the latest in a series of bigoted actions taken since 1992 when Amendment 2 passed, only to be overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court.

We have established a reputation as a hostile environment for those in the gay and lesbian community, as well as those companies who embrace these people as equals. Are they going to book their conventions here? I doubt it.

Rick Wehner
Manitou Springs

Council's vote reflects views of the majority

I am proud of the City Council's vote for no proclamation for this year's Pridefest. I am even more proud of Mayor Lionel Rivera's stand on the issue. He has demonstrated personal character Colorado Springs needs.

I believe Rivera's views support the majority of this community's opinion, Vice Mayor Richard Skorman's views on the matter notwithstanding.

Victor Fernandez
Colorado Springs

FAMILY

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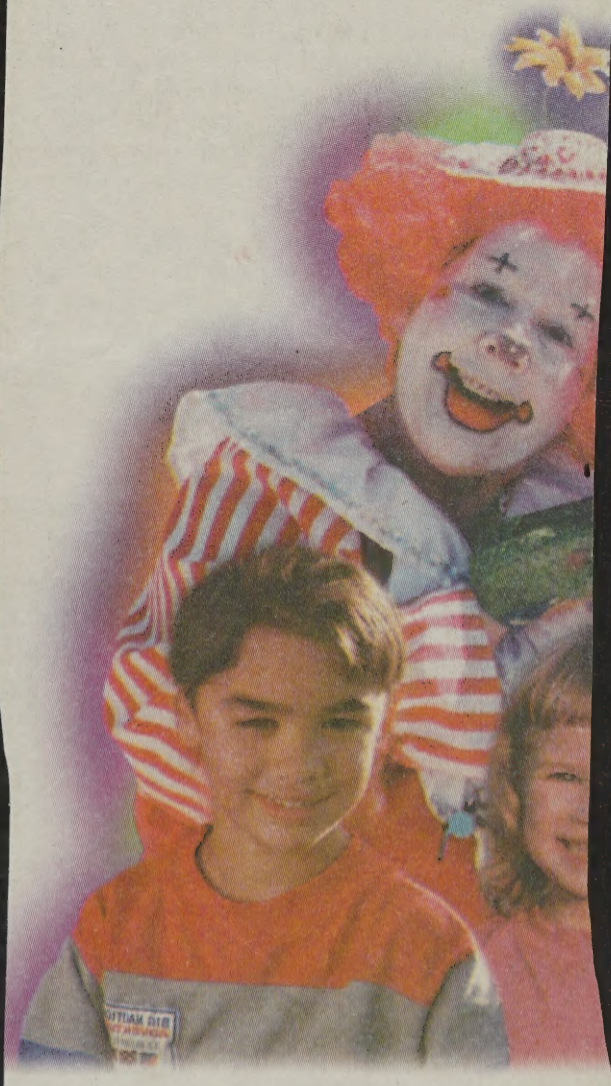
Saturday, July 10th
at High Meadows Mo



ly 10th, enjoy a day of **FREE** old-fashioned summ
at Springs Ranch. High Meadows model home s
filled with activities from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.